

# THE WEWA NEWS™

*"The Good News Newspaper!"*

FEBRUARY 2023-01 >> Vol. 5 No. 02-1 << A FREE LOCAL NEWSPAPER Take One!



## MS. VERA and MS. ERA CELEBRATE THEIR 99<sup>th</sup> BIRTHDAY IN STYLE!

by Tom Wynn

During January, what seems like nearly the entire city of Wewa worked to give these, the sweetest twins in north Florida, a super 99<sup>th</sup> birthday party on Wednesday, the 8<sup>th</sup> of February at the Senior Citizens Center in downtown Wewa. It was a big secret for three months until someone spilled the beans.

From the Wewa Woman's Club Friends of the Wewa Library to Gulf I.C. officials as well as Bayside Florist in Port St. Joe, and of course the Wewa Senior Citizens Staff were all working behind the scenes to give these ladies a great day. They are two of the nicest and lovely ladies you would ever want to meet.

Their birth weight was one pound and two pounds, born in an Alabama log cabin, kept warm near a fire by the doctor that delivered them. All of Gulf County loves them and we showed it on their 99<sup>th</sup> birthday. The city employees, the Wewa News and others did their best to bring their special day to reality.

Ms. Vera received the Key to the City of Wewa on her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday, from the City Council.



**HAPPY BIRTHDAY! FOR 99 Years the World has been blessed with your presence.** Ms. Wendy Weitzel, the editor of The Star Newspaper researched that they are the second oldest set of twin girls in the State of Florida, at the present time. (See page 7 for more photos)



Ms. Vera is in the middle with a smile on her face. A visit from Gulf C.I. folks to the Senior Citizen Center-Mr. Eddie Fields Gulf County Senior Centers Director, on the far left.

## GULF C.I. VISITORS

by Faye Marshall

Gulf County Corrections officers on January 24, 2023, came for visit to the Senior Citizens Center pictured above.

The Gulf County Senior Citizens Association in Wewa was blessed with officers from The Gulf County Correctional Institution to volunteer and serve our over 60 citizens with fried shrimp donated by **Paula Hunt (The Shrimp Lady)**. Everyone that volunteered for this event made it a special day. The fellowship and food were great! If you're over 60 and would love to be with our family at the Senior Center, come see us located behind the City Library at: 314 N 3rd Street in Wewa. Please join us. We're open from 9 am - 1 pm Monday through Friday.

## CORN GRIFFIN STREET FROM DIRT TO PAVEMENT-WILL IT EVER HAPPEN?

by Tom Wynn

Mr. James Royce Watkins, one of the spokesmen for the 24 families on Corn Griffin dirt road, stood before the City Council asking for the latest status on the possibilities of his and 23 other families getting their street paved. The residents of the dirt road community on Corn Griffin continue to ask Gulf County and the city to fix their road and its various issues.

The Mayor, Phillip Gaskin and the city Manager, Michael Gortman continue to work with the Gulf County Admin to find money and make repairs as rain and truck traffic makes the **(Story continues page 2)**

**(Corn Griffin Story from page 1)**

road rough and hard to travel on after a rain. Mr. Jack Husband, the city Engineer and the Mayor explained the cost and what was possible with grants for road paving. Most of that kind of work in a city and county comes from Grants awarded by various organizations coming from the State of Florida and the Federal government.

grants and work with the Gulf County Road department, who are doing what they can to help the situation.

Gulf County Commissioner Mr. David Rich agreed to come to the February City Commissioner's meeting to discuss the situation. He too has been working to find grant money to pave the half mile dirt road. Mr. Watkins and Rich are in communication as well on this matter.

Mayor Gaskin and Mr. Jack Husband agreed that the cost in today's dollars would be about \$220,000 to get the job done. The city agreed to continue to look for funds via grants. City Clerk Rachel Jackson has researched infrastructure grants and is an expert in grant writing, we are told. There are various means of funding of the type, including a bond fund that the city and the county agreed to many years ago. The bond money would be about half a million dollars for Wewa to re-pave roads whenever we ever see the money. Commissioner Rich and Watkins are in contact with each other on the matter since the city meeting. TW

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**CONCEALED WEAPONS PERMITS COULD  
GO BYE BYE!** by Tom Wynn



The State of Florida's Speaker of the House, Mr. Paul Renner, has proposed a new idea to his fellows in the legislation on Monday the 30<sup>th</sup> of January. He proposed to eliminate or remove the Conceal Weapons permits that Floridians, who at present, must have in order to carry a concealed weapon over the pass many years. His idea would allow gun owners to carry firearms in the state of Florida without requiring carriers to have a license or training in firearms handling and use. Keep in eye on this and see what happens. Should be interesting! TW

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**Brother Dave Hodsdon submitted this funny  
story:** A woman just returned to her home from an evening  
service at her church when she was startled by an intruder.  
She caught the man in the act of robbing her home and its  
valuables. She yelled **"Stop! Acts 2:38"**!

(The verse says: " In the name of Jesus Christ, repent and  
be baptized so that your sins may be forgiven.)

The burglar stopped in his tracks; the woman calmly called  
the police and explained what she had done. As the officer  
cuffed the man to take him in, he asked "Why did you just  
stand there?" **All the lady did was yell scripture to you.  
Scripture? She said she had an axe and two 38's!**

## **Wewahitchka Historical Society January 2023**

Dianne Semmes informed attendees that an All Class Reunion will be held on Saturday, February 18, 2023, 1-4 PM at the Wewahitchka Elementary School Cafeteria. This event is open not only for people who attended WHS, but for the community as well.

A membership drive will be held in February. The Historical Society is looking for people who enjoy the history of our wonderful little town, the history of those who were here before us, the history of anything to do with Wewa. Those who are interested in attending a meeting and finding out the various projects that we are working on, please join us at our next monthly meeting. Meetings are held on the 3rd Thursday of the month at 6:00 PM at the Corner Café. Our next scheduled meeting will be on Thursday, February 23, 2023.



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**The Wewahitchka Library has been supplying kids and adults with a venue for learning and playing chess since the spring of 2022.** Currently there are about 12 to 15 people on the contact list and anywhere from two to eight people show up to enjoy the game and occasional refreshments. All skill levels are welcome, beginners to rated players seem to understand the thrill of learning and getting better is why we play. Come check us out!

*A Bit of History-DID YOU KNOW: Jesus said that the Holy Temple would be destroyed to the point a man would plow the dirt! In August of 70 AD the Romans did just that, 40 years later.*



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## **Friends of the Wewahitchka Library by Carol Childress**

The Friends of the Wewahitchka Library is a 501c3 organization founded to assist our local library with volunteers, programs and funding to purchase needed furniture, crafts, office supplies and books.

The Friends are also preparing to celebrate Gulf County's 100 th Anniversary in 2025. They are scanning historical pictures and collecting artifacts to display at the library. **If you have any historical pictures, please contact the library at 850-639-2419.** Spring Into Bingo is being held at the Honey Hole Restaurant on Monday, March 20th . This will be a fun event and all proceeds go toward funding our library.

The Friends are also providing volunteers for the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program hosted by our local library. To schedule an appointment for

income tax preparation, please call 850-227-8737.

The Friends renewed the Ancestry.com subscription for the library, so you can research and discover your family tree. We need volunteers to help with the library Native Garden Landscape. If you have gardening skills, please contact the library.

The Friends meet the second Thursday of each month in the library at 9:30 am. We look forward to seeing you on February 9th .

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message and she will return your call.**

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## **THE WEWA LIBRARY**

by Joyelle Linton



The Charles Whitehead Public Library has access to a number of databases that are free with a library card. Library cards are Free to local residents.

If you are interested in genealogy, you might find the following databases helpful to your research: Ancestry.com, Family Search, Florida's Hidden Treasures, American Ancestors, Heritage Quest Online, Newspaper Archive, and Bay County Obituary index.

For those people looking for a job, A to Z is the premier job search, reference & mailing list database including 30 million businesses and executive profiles.

The Black Freedom Struggle website features expertly selected open primary source documents. Visitors will find historical newspaper articles, pamphlets, diaries, correspondence and more from specific time periods in U.S. history marked by the opposition African Americans have faced on the road to freedom.

The Artist Works link provides hundreds of free music lessons, taught by professional musicians through your Libby app on device or through your computer. Step through instructions provided in the links.

With Comics Plus, you have unlimited access to thousands of digital comics, graphic novels, and manga from a variety of library-friendly publishers.

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Gale Cengage Learning is a source for news and periodical articles on a wide range of topics, both general and scholarly. With over 9000 titles, 4000 of them are full text. There are specific databases for computers, health, education, business, and student homework.

Salem Literature includes access to Magill's Medical Guide, Seventh Edition. Requires library card number for access.

Worldcat.Org allows you to find items in over 10,000 libraries worldwide, including books, DVDs, CDs, and journal articles. Useful for Interlibrary Loan and can be personalized with your own lists, bibliographies and reviews. No log-in necessary to search.

Weiss Financial Ratings Series Online allows you to check investment ratings in stocks, compare bank and insurance options, create a personal Medicare Supplement Buyer's Guide Report, and access Financial Literacy resources for planning for your financial future.

Please contact the Wewahitchka Library at (850) 639-2419 for more information or assistance in accessing these databases. Our normal business hours are Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday 9:00-5:00 CT.

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**EVER WONDER WHERE TUPELO  
HONEY COMES FROM?**

by Tom Wynn



Although several different Tupelo trees yield large amounts of honey in the southeastern USA, the Apalachicola River Basin has become a major source of this sweet tasting specialty honey. Tupelo Honey is known for its high quality in taste and the fact that Tupelo does not turn to sugar, having to be heated up to return to honey. Tupelo Honey is also produced along the Ochlocknee and Choctawhatchee Rivers as well. These areas of Florida are the only place in the world where certified Tupelo Honey is produced commercially.

It is valuable for medicine and good health. Especially for burn treatment and has healing properties as most honey does. Honey is a gift to mankind according to the Bible text. It has been mentioned at least 57 times in scripture.

Submitted by Ms. Laurel Helms  
Miss Haleigh Helms 7th grade age 13 Artwork



Artwork by Miss Haleigh Helms©

A gifted artist living among us. Haleigh you are the winner of a Silver Dollar Coin, presently valued on the open market for about 24 U.S. Dollars. The Editor of Wewa News wants to reward amazing children in our local area to continue to do better for themselves and for our community. Wewa High Students submit your drawings via email:  
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**Gene and Era Luckie in 1946**



**Ms. Vera and Ms. Era a few years ago**



**Vera and Malcolm Rozier and daughters Doris and Linda June 1954 Perdido Bay, Myrtle Grove, FL.**



## **A HISTORICAL WEWA FIGURE J.L. "DADDY DOC" JOHNS**

by Tom Wynn

Pictured above is one of my favorite Wewahitchkaians folks, Daddy Doc and his lovely wife Sarah Ruth. He was one of my favorite lunch buddies of yesteryear. He was my friend and brother of a different mother. He loved the Lord with all his heart and his 6 daughters as well. He told me all 6 daughters married preachers and he was proud of them all. He died at the ripe old age of 101. I went to his 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party in Panama City, that was the last time I saw him.

He would tell me stories of his younger days as a painter in Miami and how he loved to garden in his own yard. I asked him one day how he lived so long (he was 96 at the time). He told me he lived so long because he ate out of his own garden most of the time (yet we met in our local restaurants when we were doing our talks, LOL). He said the secret of long life was to have the Lord in your heart and grow your own food very close to you, as to grow it on your own property and eat it soon after you picked it from the land, that makes sure the vitamins and minerals made into you quickly.

He told me a story about how he worked for Al Capone, the notorious Chicago Gangster who lived in Miami after they released him from Alcatraz prison in the middle of the bay in San Francisco. He was dying of a disease of the brain and did not have long to live, so they released him. Daddy Doc was hired to repair a bullet hole in the ceiling in the entrance way of his mansion in Miami. The



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butler told him not to make Al mad, because he carried a gun and would shoot him. "He was crazy!", he said.

So, Daddy Doc did his job and was paid in full. Later he was called back to do more work, having passed the test with his first job, they hired him to continue painting the rest of the house. He kept his mouth shut and never told anyone about what he saw or heard. Men would come in, but he never saw them leave Hmmm...?

I miss that old man; he was a mentor and good example to the community. He was still driving at 100, but too fast! So, his family hid his keys, but he would find a spare, so they disconnected his battery so he couldn't drive anymore.

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### **DEADLAKES PRO TACKLE SHOP OPENS!**

The pro tackle shop will open its doors to the public on the 11<sup>th</sup> of February 2023. It is located next to the store at the Dead Lakes RV Park just off Highway 71 North, just past the West Arm Creek Bridge. For more information call Deb at: 850-639-1008

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**Hear, my son, your father's instruction  
And do not forsake your mother's teaching;**

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**Indeed, they are a graceful wreath to your head  
And ornaments about your neck.**



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### WHS ALL CLASS REUNION 2023

There will be a WHS All Class Reunion on Saturday, February 18, 2023, at 1:00 PM until 4:00 PM CST, at the Wewahitchka Elementary School Cafeteria. This reunion is not only for former students, but also for anyone who would like to attend. For those who would like to bring a dessert please do so, but let Dianne know. There is no charge for this event, but there will be a donation jar. Also, the Wewahitchka Historical Society will be selling historical Afghans for \$48.00 if anyone is interested. Please contact Dianne Semmes on FB, phone, text or Messenger at 850.277.6425 if you have any questions. Look forward to seeing everyone. **GO GATORS!!!**

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### WE HAVE THIEVES AMONG US AGAIN!

by Tom Wynn

Please be on watch for your property and your neighbor's property as well. We have yet another thief among us. Several things were stolen out of the front yard on Chipola Ave. and a thief was seen on camera at a house near the schools. Please call the Sheriff's Office if you see anyone take what does not belong to them. We believe this thief is known to the community. So have a watchful eye for people around our homes and do not leave your valuables out in plain sight (good reason to clean your yard up!).

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### DID YOU KNOW?

**That Jesus told us how to conduct Court in Matthew  
chapter 18. Check it out.**

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### WHAT IS THE POPULATION OF WEWAHITCHKA TODAY?

Well, I am glad you asked that, the current population of Wewa, Florida is **2,101** based on projections of the latest US Census estimates. The last official US Census in 2020 recorded the population at 2074. Did you notice all the new houses going up in the Wewa area? We are growing folks.

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### RAY GETS A NEW TOY IN A BOX!

by Tom Wynn



UF Extension agent Ray Bodrey got himself a brand-new toy in the mail this month. I went for a visit over a bug issue I had and found him with a new toy, a super microscope. I just came in time to see him unbox and unpackage it. It was so beautiful! He said anyone can come by and see this new toy, I mean a new tool in his office for doing research. *His contact info is:* [gulf@ifas.ufl.edu](mailto:gulf@ifas.ufl.edu) (850) 639-3200 232 E. Lake Ave., P.O. Box 250 Wewahitchka, FL 32465  
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### BACK STREET MOTORS HAD GRAND OPENING PARTY

by Tom Wynn



Back Street Motors had their grand opening on January the 7<sup>th</sup> as planned. BBQ Chicken and beans as well as other goodies were on hand for those that decided to stop by and eat a little or a lot. I rode my electric gulf cart down for fun.

It reminded me of a sort of family reunion with several locals showing up for food and drink. I was told they sold several cars that day. I am glad they made the lot look so good; it sorts of dresses up that part of 2<sup>nd</sup> street now. Ms. Troi was busy with customers as they came in for a look see. This business will be a new busy one for sure. **TW**

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**John 14:6**

## NEW EMERGENCY RADIO ASSOCIATION HAS FIRST MEETING

by Tom Wynn

A group of worried locals have decided to create a new organization to make sure we have emergency communications. From the Sheriff's office (Capt. Chris Buchanan is a Ham Operator) to go as far as they can up Hwy 71 North. They are seeking individuals to have a family radio for emergency comms about every 15 miles along Hwy 71, for those of us that live in hurricane country.

During hurricane Michael, Gulf County had emergency radio comms but since then, the county system seems to be in disrepair and one of the groups originators has made several attempts to contact the Gulf County office for emergency comms, via U.S. Mail three times, to no avail.

So, several of the locals have decided to create a new form of comms between themselves in case the Gulf emergency comms system is inoperative during the next big event.



**Pictured above:** Mr. Dudley Balmer of White City (a Ham Operator), Retired CWO Tom Semmes (an expert in the Military comms and was a White House communications officer during his career in the U.S. Army, Chuck Johnson, Dave Hodsdon, AECS Tom Wynn a Retired USCG Aviation Aircraft Electrician of Wewahitchka area. They will create a 501-3c organization that would be ready for the next major event, having radio communications between each other and be able to relay up and down highway 71 as far as Blountstown by volunteers along the route, to get emergency services, passing important information up and down the Highway to our neighbors, if power and cell phone services fails. The small group had their first meeting at the Honey Hole restaurant in Wewa. Anyone interested in joining the group please contact

**Dudley Balmer at: 317-379-1644.**

The radio group is asking those that want to join the association would be about a total cost of \$160 dollars for the radio and antenna. It would be powered by a 12v battery, it could be used in your house or in a car or truck etc. The license from the U.S. Government would cost \$35 dollars for the whole household (including children) and can be bought online at Amazon.com through a company called

### **“GMRS RADIO SERVICE”.**

We are purchasing a radio with a power pack, and antenna purchased off amazon too. Model: DB25-G Radioddity from Amazon.com(Radioddity email address: [www.radioddity.com](http://www.radioddity.com))



### **CITY COMMISSION STUDY WEWA CITY MAP**

City Council had a workshop in early January on the cities Comp Plan as it is time to make updates and changes as necessary to help the city get grants as well as for other important planning in the future of Wewahitchka. Our city mayor and city commissioner Ralph Fisher are building contractors by trade, making them very knowledgeable in this area of city planning. Several changes in the wording of our Comp Plan were discussed during the workshop. Pictured above is City Manager Michael Gortman, Mayor Phillip Gaskin, Commissioner Ralph Fisher and in the background Commissioner Charlie Pettis.

**IT'S NEVER TOO LATE TO MAKE YOUR  
DREAMS COME TRUE! Jeremiah 29:11-13**



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## CONSIDER FLORIDA'S TORREYA STATE PARK FOR A FUN DAY AND BRING A PICNIC TOO!

by Tom Wynn



Not far from Wewahitchka is a beautiful Florida State Park that few newbies know about. So, consider taking a day trip and going to visit this beautiful hidden park. My father took me to Terrya State Park in the 1970's best I remember. He had been doing research in that area and found this amazing place in Florida north country.

If you will trip up north up to highway 12 and make a left turn on 27 (watch for signs) you go down for several miles of hilly countryside and there it be! Hang on for an amazing day. It is a must to take a tour of the Old **Gregory Mansion** and walk down the foot trail in front of the Mansion. It can be steep so be careful. You will not be disappointed. When you look out, standing behind the Mansion you can see for at least 50 miles, I was told. The park is on a high ridge, and you will understand why Mr. Gergory build his mansion there.



### A VIEW FROM THE MANSION



The quiet southern charm is off the beaten path of normal driving to and from Tallahassee as us Wewa folks do for shopping and doctor appointments. This place is a botanist and historian paradise filled with Florida history, character and favor of our old past. This state park is a pure blessing to the eye and the soul of those in need of a place to relax, explore and just be outside.

The park covers 13,735 acres in the Rock Bluff community about 13 miles from Bristol Florida, if you are coming from Wewa.

It gets its name from a rare Florida Tree called Torreya Tree, which was named after a Florida Botanist Dr. John Torrey. In 1834, Croom found here the still rarer Florida Yew tree, which resembles the Torreya tree.

The high bluff overlooks the Apalachicola River. The mansion was built in the "Greek Revival" architecture.

Just down from the mansion are six-gun pits dug by the Confederates guarding the river against the ascent of the Federal gunboats. The River was once a main travel route for commerce and social life in north Florida. At various times in history, Native American Indians, Spanish, British, French, Americans, Confederate and Federal troops used it for Traveling (did I leave anyone one out?)

There is a fee to tour the mansion, so check in with the park Ranger. They are full of information and are glad to tell you about it.

There is Tent camping and Trailer camping as well. So, dig in before you go online and find out all the details, so you will be prepared to have a great time. Bring a picnic basket and drinks for your visit, you will be glad you did.

If you are a bird lover or animal lover, this is a place for you to visit. I would not bring cats and dogs, as they could bring wildlife near you, and you cannot control them at times. Why spoil others' time in the park? Leave them at home.

Make sure you keep your phones and keys on your body and lock your cars and trucks etc. You never know who is in the woods. Alcohol is not allowed in the park last time I was there.

Look folks! This is your history, your USA history, your local history and your Florida history. Do as my father did and as I did, take your kids and your neighbors on a short road trip and enjoy life before you can't! In case you need the address for your GPS:

**2576 NW Torreya Park Rd, Bristol, FL 32321**

**Phone number: (850) 643-2674**

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**EMBRACE EVERY CHALLENGE**  
**Deuteronomy 30:15-18**

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THE WEWA NEWS-Tom.....(850) 404-2914  
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### INFORMATIONAL NOTICES

The Wewa News is a locally owned and operated local newspaper,  
created solely for the enjoyment of the people who live in the  
Wewa area. Our purpose is to bring "Good News" and "Whatever"  
to our locals' attention. I hope to bring back some joy and fun into  
our lives again and bring us closer than ever before. Thank you to  
those that support our efforts.

**Notice:** The Wewa News operates in the Private, freedom of  
speech and of the Press are fundamental to our effort of expression,  
as well as God given rights as men and women on the land called  
Florida. I am moving the publishing day to the 7<sup>th</sup> of the  
month effective this issue.

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### Up Coming Events and Other: Mark Your Calendars

The Local Bee Association meets at 6pm in the Gulf County Extension  
Agents meeting room on every first Tuesday of each month at 6pm.

The Friends of the Wewa Library's meet at the Wewa Library, contact  
the library for the date and time. We meet in the library conference room.

Wewahitchka Historical Society meets every month on the second  
Thursday at 6pm at the old Corner Café' building.

Contact us: [thewewanews2021@gmail.com](mailto:thewewanews2021@gmail.com)

Website: [the.wewa.news](http://the.wewa.news)